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MR. BRAY ON THE SCIENCE OF MAN.*

MR. CHARLES BRAY has had the kindness to publish a pamphlet informing the Anthropologists of Europe of the way in which they ought in future to conduct their researches. The pamphlet is amusing if it is not very instructive. Mr. Bray's Preface runs as follows :—

"The object of Anthropological Science must be to improve the race of men, and to make Newtons and Shakespears to order. Our life and soul are part of the forces and powers of nature—of the spirit ocean that surrounds us. They are entirely supplied from the great fountain which works only in accordance with fixed law, and the conditions of their existence we can therefore discover and control. If the world's thanks are universally acknowledged to be due to the late Jonas Webb for improving the breed of short horns, and for teaching us how 'to grow more mutton and wool to the acre,' surely we shall owe more to the man who will teach us how to improve the breed of men, and to grow more 'brains to the acre.' Our Anthropological Societies, both of London and Paris, are occupied too exclusively with the past; with man's antiquity; with his origin, whether born or created; with race distinctions, being most assiduous in collecting skulls, and talking most learnedly of dolichocephalic and brachycephalic heads (long and short heads), without apparently a suspicion at present that brains are of any use. As the President of the London Society truly tells us, the attention of the Society has, during the four years of its existence, been 'mostly directed to the physical characteristics of man;' and he says, 'I am not aware that a single fact of cerebral physiology has been brought under our consideration for investigation.' The object of the present writer is to enter, doubtless, 'the ignorant and egoistical' but humble protest of an outsider against this mode of proceeding; and to point to the spacious and fertile fields that invite attention. Between the aspirations of the young lady who tremblingly asks, 'why the nose is placed on the front of the face, pointing towards the infinite, if it is not to give, as it were, a foreshell of the illimitable,' and the proceedings of the Anthropological Society, there is no doubt a wide range, but either extreme is probably equally useful. As there is so much to do, perhaps it would be better to take man as we now find him, than to begin at the very beginning, where the record may be considered by some a little obscure. Of course, it is fully admitted that all honest investigation, in every field of research, is of importance; it is simply a question of relative importance."

Mr. Bray, we must admit, is a bold man; he is the first writer we know of who has openly proclaimed that the end and aim of the An-

* *The Science of Man: a bird's-eye view of the wide and fertile field of Anthropology.* By Charles Bray, author of *Force, and its Mental Correlates*. Longmans, 1868. Price 1s.

thropological Science must be to improve the breed of mankind. Mr. Bray deserves encouragement. The time may yet be far off when the Science of Anthropology will be ripe to lay down fixed laws for the improvement of the human species. We have yet to have in Europe our Anthropological gardens side by side with those of Zoology and Botany ; this is the first step towards founding a real Science of Man. In this way alone can we ever discover the way to make our Newtons and Shakespeares to order.

The first part of Mr. Bray's pamphlet is occupied mostly with what reads like a complaint against modern Anthropologists. Mr. Bray says :—

“Anthropology ‘proposes to study man in all his leading aspects, physical, mental, and historical ;’ and if it really is ‘the Science of Man,’ it must occupy itself principally with the present laws and conditions of his being. His past history—with which Anthropological Societies have hitherto too exclusively occupied themselves—as to whether he was created or born, or as to his age upon this earth, has really little to do with this science. The history of the past can be of use only so far as it bears upon the present. Except Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, we know of no man that has yet come into the world without being born ; and as to his age, whether six thousand or six hundred thousand years, for practical purposes we cannot go beyond the comparatively modern date of written record. In deference, however, to those who think such matters of importance, we will consent to go half-way with them, and take woman's advent into this world upon authority. A modern sceptical philosopher, Dr. Whately, defines woman as ‘a creature incapable of the exercise of reason, and that pokes the fire from the top ;’ but this is since the fall, for we have it on the recognised authority of Matthew Henry's Commentary, that man was dust refined, but that woman was dust double-refined, one remove further from the earth ; and that Adam slept while his wife was in making, that no room might be left to imagine that he had herein “directed the Spirit of the Lord, or been his counsellor.” And also we are told by the same learned Commentator, having reference, doubtless, to the obedience that a woman is known to owe to man, ‘that the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam ; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.’ Now we are willing to take all this about woman on such excellent authority, so that anything we have to say less orthodox about man may be condoned. A ‘Science of Man’ ought to teach us how to make a man according to the most approved pattern, and with all the modern improvements. Anthropology, it must be confessed, has advanced little in this direction at present, and has occupied itself too exclusively with scratching among the dry bones of past ages ; but it is with living function and not dead form that we have to do.”

Mr. Bray says, “there exists a curious difference of opinion amongst

the Members of the London Anthropological Society on the subject of the physiology of the brain." We believe that on this and other subjects there must, of necessity, be great differences of opinion; if men were all of one opinion there would be no necessity for their meeting together to discuss subjects. Mr. Bray seems to be in a dreadful hurry that every one should believe as he does; he seems to be one of the few remaining mongrel philosophers who believe in Spurzheim as their god, and George Combe as his prophet. Mr. Bray may yet become himself an interesting object of study, as being the last of his kind. We are sorry for Mr. Bray; if he could only get phrenological jumble out of his blood he might yet write wisely. Mr. Bray asserts "the bridge between physics and metaphysics has been found." By whom? This we are not told. There is just a glimmer of hope that Mr. Bray may yet be saved from further folly when we read thus: Metaphysics "is based on physics;" we cannot say that such is the fact, but we admit it ought to be. We wish Mr. Bray would let us have a look at the metaphysics which is based purely on physics. Mr. Bray believes that phrenology is such a system; we are sorry for his delusion.

A specimen of Mr. Bray's views will assist to dispel the idea that we have yet discovered the physics of the brain. He says:—

"We might have brains translating the forces from without into mental impressions of an entirely different kind; as it is, no two persons' mental impressions are the same, but vary in clearness, in intensity, and in breadth, according to the size, and quality or temperament, of the organ or part of the brain with which they are connected. Transmuted forces thus passing through one portion of the brain, and acted upon by forces from without, create the world as it appears in our consciousness; passing through other larger portions of the brain, the organs of the propensities and sentiments, they create the world of our likes and antipathies, called the moral world. This world of ideas and feelings, about which we make such an undignified fuss, is purely phenomenal, and passes away with each turn of the great kaleidoscope—with each evolution and correlation of force. Our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears, our sins and sorrows, our good and evil, are purely subjective, affecting only ourselves; of the One Great Reality, or Entity, or Spirit, or Power, or Force, that underlies *all* phenomena, we can know nothing; our own will-power alone constituting a distant analogy. We know, however, that,

‘For love, and beauty, and delight
There is no death nor change.’—*Shelley*.

With respect to races of men and the permanence of physical types, "the Darwinists assume that all animals, including man, are derived from a small number of simple beings, possibly from a primordial monad. The monogenists, with much less boldness, are of opinion that all human races are derived, if not from a single couple, at least from a certain number of primitive men perfectly resembling each

other. The Polygenists finally assert that human types are only liable to slight modifications ; that the chief physical characteristics are permanent ; and that, consequently, the actual diversity of races can only be attributed to the multiplicity of their origin.* We greatly incline to the latter hypothesis. Without going with the Darwinists to the very beginning, it seems probable that the causes that were equal to the production of the simple beings could have produced also the more complex, and still more probable that the causes that could have produced a single man could have equally produced all the varieties. We believe, with Professor Macdonald, in ' the separate centres of creation of the different races adapted to the different parts of the world, and that the east and midland mountains had peculiar creations adapted to them.' The Professor shows us how ' a due consideration of the progressive development of an embryo or germ within the Graafian vesicle would militate against Darwinism in any attempt to press hybridism beyond the boundary of nearly allied species, and also against breeding among hybrids, themselves being carried beyond the third or fourth generations, unless refreshed by one or other of the originating species.'†

" Races that had probably the same ancestral types, such as those which now inhabit Europe, are crossed with advantage, but the crossing of distinct races makes mongrels ; what the inferior gains the superior loses ; and there is always a tendency to revert to the original or ancestral type. It will be easier then to breed from good stock, and thus fill the world on the Malthusian principle, than to improve the inferior races, which, on the principle of natural selection, cannot fail to be ' civilised ' off the face of the earth."

We must decline to follow our author into the second part of his pamphlet, entitled " The Occult Powers of Man." We quote the two concluding pages, and are glad to see that our author is not so severe on us at the end of his work as at the beginning. We will only hope that Anthropologists will, ere long, be favoured with the system of metaphysics, " which is based on physics." Mr. Bray thus ends his pamphlet :—

" Force is persistent, and both body and mind are indestructible, except in form ; and what new form they may take in the future it is impossible to say ; but, if it be such as has been assigned to them by the spiritualists, it is a dark look-out for us indeed. What is the nature or essence of that Agent, or Substance, or Being, or Entity, or Force, underlying all phenomena, but whose mode of action only is known to us, we do not know. By force or power we mean the cause of all things, that which can and does produce all phenomena ; but this power is as inseparable from its source, or that to which it belongs, as motion is from the thing that moves. If unity is claimed for the mind, it lies in that which underlies *all* phenomena, and not in its mode of action, alone known to us ; and however varied these phe-

* *Anthropological Review*, January, 1868, p. 42.

† *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, pp. 118-122, July, 1868.

nomena, it may be that a few simple laws underneath, attributes of the source of all power, produce all the variety: 'Pleasure and pain being to voluntary motion what attraction and repulsion are to inorganic matter, and the Science of Morality to the analysis of pleasure and pain what the Science of Chemistry is to the different substances that compose this globe.'* This unity of the noumenon, &c., may also account for all that at present seems so mysterious to us in clairvoyance and other normal and abnormal conditions of mind. Whether we have any powers or intuitions which enable us to see 'through phenomena to laws,' and through laws to the Lawgiver, is yet matter for investigation. It would seem as if there were occasional gleams through small chinks which will widen with the ages. We have 'a noumenal integer phenomenally differentiated into the glittering universe of things;' and to pass from one to the other, to be absorbed in universal being, is the great aim of the Buddhist, whose one infallible diagnostic is the belief in the infinite capacity of the human mind. The natural eye, he says, takes account only of appearances; it requires the severest discipline for a man to behold the reality. Prayer, fasting, and solitude constituted this discipline, and certainly as the brain is emptied of its natural force by these means, it is filled with force from without, often inducing a state of trance in which the barrier between individual and general mind seems at least to be partially broken down. But whatever may be the powers of man, and the relation of the concentrated forces which constitutes his individuality, to the natural forces around him, we can scarcely be said yet to have placed their investigation on anything like a scientific basis; and Mr. Le Gros Clark, in a lecture recently delivered to the Council and Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, said that the nature and functions fulfilled by the electric fluid in the sustaining of animal and vegetable life is still as profound a secret as was the law of gravitation before the days of Kepler and Newton. When this is done and the light of science is let into this department, we shall at least be able to do for the onward progress in mind as much as steam has done for mere material civilisation. The power of the ancient magician, the miracles of all religions, the powers of clairvoyance are real, and we have only to bring them under law to make them serviceable,—not, as heretofore, to chicanery and superstition, but to a great advance in mental science. Surely this is the legitimate function of the Anthropological Society. The *Anthropological Review*, April, 1867, says, 'To whatever cause it may be attributed, let us begin with the rather humiliating confession that, anthropology, both in its classification and terminology, is in a miserably confused and almost chaotic condition.' This, I fear, is too true, although the last number of the *Review and Journal* (July, 1868) shows a more living interest. Would not the objects of the society be better promoted if 'The Science of Man' were divided into departments, and committees were appointed to *investigate* and report not on what man *was*, and how and when and where he began, but on what he is now, here present, and what he may become under scientific development?"

* *Philosophy of Necessity*, p. 21, second edition.